

Friday Reflection

Week One of “Distance Learning” is in the books. While very different than any I have ever experienced in 54 years of education (Counting when I was student), it was still productive. Today I will reflect on my week as principal, but also provide students, parents and our community on overview of the distance learning plan for the near future. Finally, I want to celebrate some students.

My week started with a flurry. I actually sat in a room in my home talking on-line with every department in the school. I held 8 virtual meetings throughout the day to roll out the plan for distance learning with teachers and counselors. There was a great deal of planning and work by so many to prepare for the coming weeks. I realized Monday, this was just the beginning to our distance learning transition. I was encouraged and impressed with our teachers as we met. Their tech savviness was evident, as well as an eagerness to make the best of a difficult situation. There were lots of questions and sharing of ideas. Over-all, I left the meetings with a sense that our students are in good hands with this “distance learning”. Teachers showed their passion for learning and helping others, no doubt the reason they entered the profession in the first place.

As the week continued, I moved from one virtual meeting to another checking in on some and planning and problem-solving with others. One of the highlights of the week was joining the ASB class’s virtual meeting. 33 students and 3 adults joined together to talk about how they can contribute to supporting and leading in this unique situation. Viewing the students on screen, sitting in their home environments, I gained a sense of the impact this week has had on them as students. I could sense the frustration of missing out on so many activities associated with this time of the year. I also gleaned their appreciation for the opportunity to attend classes during normal circumstances. However, I also noticed their commitment to making the current restrictions not get in the way of their present or future. I’m often impressed with our students, their passion, their compassion, their drive, their resilience, their creativity, their kindness and their commitment to getting better. During the 50 minutes I sat in on the conversation, I was reminded of these qualities in our students.

Another unique aspect of this week was our daily lunch distribution from our parking lot. Well over 800 lunches were distributed to students 18 years and under. Cars pulled into and circled the lot to reach a distribution center for the meals. It looked like a fast food drive thru on steroids.

Dr. Jon Tuin

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From an academic perspective, this week was primarily a transition to next week when we strive to fully implement distance learning. Our goal is to deliver a process so students experience some sense of flow, productivity and connectedness in their week. Ultimately, we want them to continue learning and being connected, despite the distance. The basic structure looks something like the following:

Monday/Wednesday – Mini lessons and assigned activities will be posted from History, Social Science, Math and World Language on each teacher's learning site. All sites are posted on our website. Go the home page and look for the link to one of our three main sites for distance learning. The link to our teacher site and counselor site are near the top of the home page just under the main picture. Students should already know how to access their teacher's learning site through either Haiku or Google classroom, but we created the links on our website to make easier for everyone.

Tuesday/Thursday – Mini lessons and assigned activities will be posted from English, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, CTE and other electives in the same places as described above.

Friday (Monday for Tuesday/Thursday courses) – Is a day for reflecting and catching up.

Other important aspects of our plan include short daily postings from our teachers to check in, encourage or just update students. These will likely be brief videos. Also, daily teacher "office hours" will be available. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for one on one or small group meetings with teachers to gain additional support and help.

Speaking of help, there are some great resources available for students, including Grade Slam. Grade Slam is an on-line tutoring program that is an incredible resource provided by TUSD, especially during such a time as this. Students should have access to this resource already, but they should contact their teacher if for some reason they need additional information on how to access this service.

Some might be concerned about some of the various standardized tests we take during this time of year. The CAASPP Test, for example, will not be given this year. The ELAC test was suspended and will not be completed. As far as AP Testing, this will still occur, but in a modified format. College Board will provide an on-line version of their AP test that will be shorter and not include content generally taught in the spring quarter.

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Hopefully, you have a sense that a great deal of work is going into providing the best education possible under the circumstances. As long as we are not in school, life will be different. However, I am grateful to be connected with a district and school team that is very comfortable with technology committed to continuing the learning.

Related to the benefits of high commitment to learning. I learned of three students this week who recently received some good news about next year. Like every Spring, college acceptances and final decisions will take center stage for many of our seniors. Every year, we host a “#accepted” celebration for seniors, where they can celebrate their plans for next year. It has become an important Tiller tradition and we are still waiting to see if that will happen on our campus this year. However, I thought I would create a weekly celebration of some of our seniors in my Friday Reflection. I would ask that parents, students and teachers let me know of college or career plans for next year that you would want posted in this document. My goal is to keep a running list of seniors and their college acceptances and plans.

Congratulations to the following students this week:

Reese Marcosa was accepted to Bethesday University in Anaheim where he will play first base and pitch as he pursues a degree in Business Administration.

Dhaval Vora and Anaka Mahesh were both accepted in the UCLA Engineering program, one of the most impacted majors at this highly selective school.

Natalia Murrietta was accepted to both Northwestern University in Chicago and Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania, both very selective schools. She also wants to pursue a degree in engineering.

It is a great reminder that life will go on after this virus pandemic is behind us. Check that; life is going on now, just differently. What isn't different, is that we have awesome students and adults associated with Tustin High School. May you and your family find meaning and be safe in this challenging time.

Go Tillers!

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Senior #accepted List:

Reese Marcosa – accepted/recruited, Bethesday University in Anaheim; plans - Business Administration & play baseball

Dhaval Vora – accepted, UCLA; plans - Engineering

Anaka Mahesh – accepted, UCLA; plans - Engineering

Natalia Murrietta – accepted, Northwestern University in Chicago, Carnegie Melon University in Pennsylvania; plans - engineering.

Ava McInnes – accepted/recruited, University of California San Diego; plans - play volleyball

Taylor Kelly – accepted/recruited, San Francisco State University; plans to play softball

Parker Cadacio – accepted/recruited Emery Riddle University in Arizona; plans to play baseball

Desaraie Sales – accepted/recruited, Concordia University in Irvine; plans to run XC and track



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